Supply of free Inhalers to asthma patients

3136. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA :

SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN :

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to initiate any special programme to supply free inhalers to asthma patients across the country;

(b) if so, whether the same can be done in a phased manner and by when; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA) : (a) to (c) No, Sir. There no such proposal.

SARS cases in Hong Kong and South East Asia

3137. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE :

SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA :

SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY :

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that new pneumonia virus which is behind the outbreak of a mysterious respiratory disease called Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) has been identified in Hong Kong and some parts of South East Asia;

(b) if so, the details thereof including its indications and symptoms;

(c) whether the disease is spreading its tentacles very fast to other parts and threatening to be a world pandemic; and

(d) if so, the steps taken/proposed to be taken to insulate the country from SARS?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Canadian scientists working in collaboration with World Health Organization (WHO) including those from Centre for Disease Control, Atlanta, USA have identified the genome of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) virus. The virus has been named Urbani Strain of Corona Virus (associated with SARS) in honour of Dr. Carlo Urbani the WHO physician who defined SARS but unfortunately died of the same disease. The main symptoms

of suspected case of SARS are high fever (more than 38 degrees C or 100.4 degrees F), dry cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty in breathing. Fever alongwith any of the above mentioned symptoms has to occur in a person who had close contact with a patient of suspected/probable SARS and/or history of travel to an affected area. Changes in X-Ray indicative of pneumonia makes it a probable case.

(c) As per World Health Organization's information a total of 3293 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) cases have been reported till 16th April, 2003 with 159 deaths in 22 countries. The disease originated in the Guangdong Province of China and spread to other countries in four continents facilitated by Air Travel. Local transmission has been reported to have occurred in six countries namely China, Vietnam, Singapore, USA, Canada & U.K. (affected area).

(d) Keeping in view the implications of an epidemic, Government of India has taken necessary steps which include the following :

- WHO recommended case definition was adopted for India and circulated to All Air Port Health Organizations/Port Health Organizations, Central Govt. Hospitals, Ministry of Civil Aviation/ Airports Authority of India and State/U.T. Health authorities along with patient management protocols.
- National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD), Delhi has been designated as the nodal agency to investigate any suspected cases/outbreak. A control room is functioning round the clock.
- A proforma to screen all persons disembarking in India for symptoms of suspected probable SARS cases has been prepared and handed over to Immigration Bureau.
- The health care facilities at International Airports and Ports have been strengthend by deploying additional doctors and evolving a standard operating protocol. The health staff is monitoring passengers of flights and ships arriving in India to report any suspected case and to take further appropriate action.
- National Institute of Communicable Diseases, Delhi and National Institute of Virology, Pune have been identified as the nodal agencies for laboratory investigation of any suspected/probable case.
- Facilities for treatment of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome in isolation have also been arranged in the Central Govt. Hospitals as also in other Infectious Disease Hospitals.

- Ministry of Health and F.W. has held coordination meetings with concerned Ministries and with WHO.
- Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has obtained the required primers for preparing reagents to diagnose the viruses believed to be causing SARS.
- Media is being kept informed on the efforts made by the Government to prevent SARS from entering the country and to create public awareness.
- The situation is being monitored on day-to-day basis.

Two child norm

3138. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR :
SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH :

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that two child norm meant to encourage smaller families is crippling women in many States/UTs;

(b) whether some women organizations have approached Government and the National Human Rights Commission complaining that the ground reality on two-child norm is not only against women, but also against the depressed classes; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of Government to the complaints received from the various organizations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA) : (a) The National Population Policy adopted by the Government of India in February 2000 advocates for adoption of a small family norm. It affirms the commitment of Government towards stabilizing population of the country by allowing its citizens to make voluntary and informed decisions about their family size.

(b) and (c) On a complaint dated 24-5-2002 received from All India Democratic Women's Association, raising certain important issues relating to the National Population Policy, the National Human Rights Commission called for reports from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Human Resource Development (Department of Women and Child Development) and the National Commission on Population. Report from the Department of Women and Child Development is still awaited.